

## In Days Gone By

(From a 1950 Clipper.)

At Town Meetings held in 1799 it was voted to divide Duxbury into 4 school districts and erect a schoolhouse in each. Each schoolhouse, which was to measure 24 by 26 feet, was to cost \$200. In those days people didn't care what they did with their money.

Residents of the northeast district built the Powder Point school on piles over a sunken marsh, instead of on nice solid land. This quaint location had certain advantages, of course. The kiddies, for example, could fish for minnows through the cracks in the floor (well, what do you expect for \$200?) or out of the west window.

How come the kiddies could drop their hooks for minnows during certain tides? Well, you must remember that when Powder Point School was built in 1800 there was no Powder Point Ave. The marsh on which the school stood fronted on a parcel of land owned by Charles Drew (it is now owned by Dr. James Ladd and past the Drew house ran an old road that ran north past the house and then wound in a southeasterly direction to the beginning of Smith Lane.

The old school is gone now, but there is a marker on its site.

### Labor Cheaper

Built a new house lately? Around 1800 in Duxbury, when ship carpenters worked for 50 cents a day, you could build a Cape Cod for \$400. In those days, ship carpenters worked from dawn to sundown.

The Washington St. house now occupied by Mrs. Juan De-Zengotita (Barbara Thomas) and her family was built for \$400. Barbara's great-grandfather paid \$750 for the Cape in 1851.

Life was different then. At the

turn of the 19th century, doctors received 50 cents for house visits. Before 1798, when Washington St. was built, there was an oxroad that ran from Duxbury Bay past the house occupied by the De-Zengotitas to Tremont St. This accounts for the fact that the house owned by Dr. Philip Hatfield, which was built before 1800, faces south.

### Few Professionals

In 1815 Duxbury there was no lawyer "and only one of each of the other professions."

There was Dr. Hathaway, "ready to go at a call to any of his patients, rich or poor." He was a masterful story-teller, according to the author of *Duxbury Fifty Years Ago*. He was the life of the clam-bake.

More austere was the minister, the Rev. John Allyn. "Apparently without hope for himself in this world, he was ever willing to help the needy, to comfort the afflicted and to do good otherwise as he had opportunity. Riding about in his large square-topped chaise, sitting himself in one corner of it and guiding his old horse carelessly, he had always in the box-seat some cordial for the sick, or food for the hungry, which he gave, expecting no return, not even thanks."

A few years later Methodist preachers came to Duxbury, bringing "awakenings and revivals." One, a convert, was Father Taylor, a former sailor who spiced his fiery sermons with nautical phrases and metaphors. When he preached "in a hall used often for dancing parties," the "scene was fearful: many were stricken down, uttering in their misery wild cries of terror; others shouted out in joy and triumph, and all who heard were in some way moved, for the strong wild man was terribly in earnest."